

retired in the 1990s he had logged 52 years as a truck driver and 30 years as a farmer.

Mr. Speaker, I commend and congratulate Bill for his many years of dedicated and devoted service to the United States of America, his family, and his community. It is with great honor that I recognize him today. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in applauding his service as a veteran and in wishing him and his family nothing but the best.

CELEBRATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CENTER FOR ASIAN AMERICANS UNITED FOR SELF EMPOWERMENT (CAUSE)

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2018

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise with my colleague, Congresswoman JUDY CHU, to recognize the Center for Asian Americans United for Self Empowerment (CAUSE), a nonprofit organization based in the Greater Los Angeles area. CAUSE has played a pivotal role in the promotion of civic engagement and leadership development within the local Asian Pacific American (APA) community for the last 25 years.

CAUSE began in 1993 as the Chinese Americans United for Self Empowerment. The organization has been chaired since its inception by Charlie Woo. In 2003, due to the APA community's diversifying population, CAUSE expanded its mission to serve the larger APA community, and changed its name accordingly to the Center for Asian Americans United for Self Empowerment.

CAUSE was created with the mission to advance the political and civic empowerment of the APA community through nonpartisan voter outreach, training, education, and leadership development. By providing a greater understanding of APA issues, access to resources, and a large and thriving network, CAUSE has played a pivotal role in empowering the next generation to vote, participate, and lead.

CAUSE has created a pipeline of leadership development programs that cultivates leaders for the APA community. The oldest of these programs is the Leadership Academy, an undergraduate internship program, which has graduated 26 classes and has exposed students to decision makers, policy makers, and issues of the day. The program's young leaders have developed a deeper awareness of the political issues the APA community faces in California and in Washington, D.C.

CAUSE's Leadership Institute, a six-month fellowship, trains mid-career professionals to become greater advocates for the APA community. The fellowship is comprised of intimate policy roundtable discussions, civic leadership skill development, and access to political leaders who speak at leadership luncheons.

The CAUSE Leadership Council & Network is comprised of preeminent next-generation leaders, who are selected to participate by invitation only. Members move the APA community forward through education, networks, and advancement into leadership positions. They also look to ensure equal opportunities for leadership representation by building key connections and skills necessary to advance and empower emerging leaders.

Through these programs, CAUSE has developed a network of over 200 alumni. CAUSE is also especially dedicated to advocating for more women to rise to positions of power. The CAUSE Women in Power program serves over 400 women annually through leadership conferences to discuss issues women leaders face while exploring strategies to overcome them. This program inspires women to reach their full potential.

CAUSE has been a primary source of information for foreign and native-born APAs. CAUSE's Voter Outreach, Training & Education (VOTE) Initiatives provide voters with valuable access to voter education and registration workshops, candidate debates and forums, and community issue town halls. With over 200 volunteers, the VOTE Initiatives work to increase APA turnout and voter registration, the understanding of candidates and propositions, and discussion of politics and community issues.

Today, the APA community is the fastest growing community in the U.S. and is projected to be the largest immigrant group in the country by 2055. APA voters increased from more than 2 million voters across the country in 2000 to 3.9 million voters in 2012. In addition, there has been a growth of over 600,000 new APA voters nationwide within the last three election cycles. However, only about half of eligible voters were registered in 2016, and there is still a lack of representation in political leadership roles. The APA community is sure to see increased voter activity and voter engagement under CAUSE's stewardship.

Under the leadership of CAUSE's Executive Director, Kim Yamasaki, the organization's budget for programs and staff has increased by more than 50 percent. CAUSE is better positioned than ever to fully activate and engage the APA community in politics and the world around them.

On April 5, 2018, CAUSE celebrates its silver anniversary at an event in Downtown Los Angeles with several hundred supporters in attendance. Mr. Speaker, we ask our colleagues to please join us in celebrating CAUSE's first 25 years of success. We look forward to its next 25 years with great anticipation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LOIS FRANKEL

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2018

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on roll call vote 104, I was not present because I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY.

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2018

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the mullahs in Tehran are among the world's worst human rights abusers. This year we have witnessed their brutality again on display as they mercilessly crushed political dissent from their own people. International attention has faded but

the Iranian people are still in the streets demanding their rights, whether they be economic opportunity, access to water, religious freedom, or gender equality. The United States must support these dissidents fighting for freedom and basic human rights.

In response, the regime has murdered dozens and locked-up thousands as it has done so many times before without punishment from the outside world. In perhaps one of the most egregious cases, in 1988 the Iranian regime initiated a systematic massacre of thousands of political dissidents. The barbaric mass executions by hanging and firing squad included teenagers and pregnant women who refused to renounce their political affiliations, including many from the MEK—today's leading Iranian dissident group.

It's important to remember and emphasize who exactly were the victims of this bloody massacre. Iranian security officials would ask detainees "What is your political affiliation?" Those who said "MEK" would be immediately placed on execution lists. So horrific was the act that the deputy to Ayatollah Khomeini at the time called it "the greatest crime committed during the Islamic Republic, for which history will condemn us."

Their day of reckoning is fast approaching. It has taken 30 years to condemn and investigate this horrific massacre. The United States must act swiftly to ensure that the Mullahs in Tehran are finally held accountable. Our government must work with international partners to also investigate other major human rights abuses such as the dozens more killed during protests in 1999, 2009, and 2017. In all cases, the families of those murdered by the regime were never told what happened to their loved ones' remains. The United States government and our allies must make it a priority to pressure the Iranian regime to disclose where the final resting place of the missing is so that their families may have a small bit of peace.

Another horrific violation of human rights and decency is taking place today on the shores of Libya. In 2011, our government self-righteously intervened in Libya to topple the regime of Muammar al-Gadhafi and then turned its back on that country. It is now a full-blown failed state where human trafficking is taking place.

Human trafficking is modern day slavery. We are seeing thousands of desperate refugees attempting to cross the war-torn country to the freedom and opportunity of Europe only to end up being exploited by slave traders. Estimates indicate there are about 500,000 to a million migrants bottled up in Libya that could be fodder for this despicable slave trade. Evil men, whether they be criminal opportunists or terrorists, are subjugating those in the most need for their own profit. You cannot put a price on human life.

The fact remains that we simply do not know enough about what exactly is going on in Libya today. The U.S. government and Congress should further investigate this tragic development of human slavery in Libya so we can get to the bottom of what is actually going on.

We must know who is exploiting migrants for profit, where the money is going, and compel Libyan authorities and the international community to respond decisively. It is our moral duty to fight for the voiceless who are being sold as chattel on the shores of Libya.